

***It's A Dog's Life***

A scruffy, skinny little dog was ambling through the park,  
He sniffed a flower, chased a bird and chewed a piece of bark,  
And looked around for morsels but he didn't find a lot.  
“Gets worse and worse,” he sniffed, “the country’s really gone to pot.”

“Still, never mind,” he thought, “’twill soon be dark and then I’ll eat.”  
But raiding people’s garbage cans for bones and bits of meat  
Was not much of a life, and he was one unhappy dog;  
Times never had been easy, but of late they’d been a slog.

He turned around, but just as he was heading for the gate  
He heard a deep and grav’lly bark behind him, growling: “Wait!”  
He turned around again, and wondered, “Crikey, what’s this mean?”  
As facing him he found the biggest hound he’d ever seen.

“H-h-hello,” our hero stuttered, like he was in pain;  
“Hello, my little friend,” replied the fearsome looking Dane.  
“Just thought I’d stop and talk a while,” he put in with a woof,  
Then added, “Christ old son, you are a weedy, little poof.

Whatever do they feed you on? you’re scrawny as can be;  
I mean, all right, not every dog can grow as big as me,  
But you look like an inmate of a concentration camp.  
Don’t take offence, old sport, but you’re one sorry looking scamp.”

The doggie bristled angrily but didn’t raise a shout.  
“I’d better not,’ he thought, “besides, he’s far too big to clout.’  
“Yeah, well, I’m just a humble mut, I’ve got no pedigree,  
But anyway, there’s more to life than being rich, you see.”

“I didn’t mean it like that, chum, and me, I’m just a peasant,  
But when you’re broke and on skid row, life can’t be very pleasant.  
Who’s your master?”

“Master?” The little dog replied, “I’ve never heard that word.”  
And asked the Dane to whom or what it was that he referred.  
“The man who feeds you, keeps you warm and baths you once a week.  
I shouldn’t think he baths you, cos your fur’s not very sleek.”

“A man bath me? You’re joking, pal, the only bath I get  
Is when it rains at night, and bloody hell, do I get wet!  
Especially when it’s windy, cos the doorway where I kip  
Ain’t half exposed, what with the village being in a dip.”

“Oh, you’re a country dweller, eh? and as you sleep outside  
You must be someone’s watchdog, (you can hardly be a guide).  
What sort of job you got then, do you guard a flock of sheep?”  
“Don’t be a prat, the only time I count them in my sleep.”

“Oh, I see, friend, you’re unemployed, but surely you get fed?”  
The little dog’s mouth watered as he sadly shook his head.  
“You’ve got no master, got no home, you must be in a mess.”  
“Hard times,” replied the mongrel, “and I’m hungry, I confess.”

“You’d better find a master if you can”, the Dane said brightly,  
“Then you can sleep beside a fire and chew a big bone nightly.”  
“I wouldn’t mind a small one at the moment,” and he wept  
At thinking how much better his new friend both dined and slept.

“Yes, he’s so good to me, my Master, though I seldom meet  
Another dog, except when we go walking in the street.  
But if I stop to talk, he pulls my lead and says, ’Come on’.  
I don’t like that, but he’s the boss, so I must run along.”  
“Your lead?” said the little dog.

“Yes, can’t you see my collar?” And he raised his head up high  
So that a silver studded collar sparkled ’gainst the sky.  
“You mean you have to wear that thing?”  
“Oh yes, it makes me cough,  
But I just grin and bear it, for he never takes it off.”  
“And when he pulls it must you go wherever Master says?”  
“That’s right, old son, I always have and will for all my days.”

“In other words, despite your pedigree, you’re just a slave?”  
“Well, yes, you put it like that and it does sound rather grave.  
But there’s worse things (like hunger) in this life, than slavery.”  
“So say you”, said the scamp, “I’m hungry but at least I’m free.”

They stood there talking amiably, the Great Dane was in clover,  
He’d never had a friend before, but then ’twas “Come on, Rover!”  
“I’ll have to go,” the big dog said.  
“I’ll see you here again?”  
“Doubt it,” the Dane sighed, “Master seldom lets me off the chain.”

Then he was gone, the little dog stood there alone and blue.  
“Goodbye big fella, sure was nice to meet and talk to you.”  
He shed a silent tear at having found then lost a friend  
In such a short while, then went off in search of food again.

He ate reasonably well that night, and slept both warm and dry,  
For though it was September, still the temperature was high.  
But soon it would be winter, once again there’d come the freeze,  
He thought of Rover, sleek, well fed, a life of wealth and ease.

And when he thought of Rover, fattened slave that he might be,  
He envied him a little, thinking: “Yeah, big deal, I’m free.”  
Meanwhile, at home with Master sat the Dane, and thought of him:  
A free dog doesn’t have to serve a master’s every whim.

And though he was well groomed and fed with not a care or need,  
He envied his ephemeral friend, and sighed: “If I were freed...”  
Thus ends a sad and tragic tale translated from the Greek,  
But in its text you’ll find a moral, if you care to seek.

The moral is that freedom is a treasure we should guard,  
And never should relinquish, although times grow very hard,  
But ultimately, freedom on its own is meaningless,  
Man must have livelihood as well to find true happiness.